

C. H. Miller, M. D.,
JOHNSTOWN, SCHUYLKILL CO., PA.
ALL professional business attended to
with care and promptness. *Per* Post-
Office address—Orwin, Schuylkill Co., Pa.

LYKENS

7

TWENTY YEARS AGO.

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH.

BY

CHAS. H. MILLER, M. D.

LYKENS, PA.:

"REGISTER" PRINT.

1876.

THE

OF

THE

THE

THE

THE

THE

An Historical Sketch.



IN the sketch that is intended to be presented to you of the primitive days of a town since grown into importance and position; a town largely increasing in trade and population; a town now the outlet of almost a half million tons of coal annually; whose location is among the richest anthracite coal beds in the State; whose future is the most promising, and whose present is full of prosperity, although the colors may be criticised by some as being too flashy and the characters as overdrawn, the essential features of the whole are as accurate as memory yet can produce them or as personal enthusiasm will permit. The author was a personal witness of all he intends to portray, and, in the most, an actual participant.

Before the picture is at all placed into position for inspection, however, or the screen is removed, let it be distinctly understood that the author's memory is not an infallible organ, and that it therefore may be possible that some grievous errors may have been committed, not only in regard to facts of minor importance, but also in regard to facts of the most essential importance. The impressions of a youth of five or six years of age are not the most inaffaceable of things, although the faculty of observation may have been largely developed from youth up, and the powers of retention more than ordinary. Let it also be understood; as well, that the objects treated of

are such as would most likely present themselves to one so young, and that the colors, very naturally indeed, correspond to the degree of impression.

Twenty years is not a period attaching any especial reverence to it in point of time alone: the numbers are comparatively few: they express nothing in the least suggestive of hoary age and the ivy-grown ruins of time; yet to those among you who saw the original of this picture, twenty years ago, and who see the variations of it now, the period embraced is full of significance, and already burdened with age; its numbers are expressive of wonderful changes, each and all,—changes so great, in fact, that the barest outlines of the everlasting mountains and hills are alone discernable.

The homeliest of villages, Lykens twenty years ago! Mountains on either side, well-timbered yet, and preserving much of their ancient grandeur and sublimity. The creeks were lost in the mazes of an almost impenetrable forest, and the very business portion of the village closely surrounded by the unconquerable wilderness. Where now are erected some of the stateliest of mansions, were ridges of stone of unfathomable depths, whose pointed backs, moss-covered and time-riven, were the greatest of obstacles to progress. The very railway was but a few years old, and the steam-engine yet an object of curiosity. Streets that are now closely built up with fashionable residences, adorned with neat pavements and grateful shade trees; streets now the life and beauty of the town, were then entirely unknown, save on the town plot—unclaimed from the wilderness, or but roughly hewn into shape. Especially was this the case in regard to North and South Second streets, and those streets now bordering upon each creek. Main street extended no further eastward than the railway-crossing, and its most western limits were in the immediate neighborhood of the present post-office. Market street, beyond the stone bridge,

was but newly opened, the loose, yellow soil of which sank deep under the horses' hoof, and the prostrate forms of the oak and pine lay thick upon either side. Many of the houses were yet of logs, boarded upon the outside, a story-and-a-half high,—the pioneers of civilization, in fact, hastily reconstructed. Those newly erected were frequently not of the most substantial kind,—mere shanties of a larger space. Exceptions there were, of course, but these few and far between; the new houses remaining unpainted for years, and the old were already beyond that stage when paint could materially benefit or improve them. The solitary brick house of the period, the home of the Savages, on North Market street, then bore the honors and dignity of the village.

Nor is it at all to be understood that the very heart of the village was closely built upon. Unoccupied sections, lots or half-lots, existed at almost regular intervals, from one end of Main street to the other; some inclosed with fences and others not, as the desires or circumstances of the proprietors dictated; Market street being in nowise exempt from this general condition of affairs. Odd Fellows' Hall had not been erected as yet, and the tract upon which it is now located was then open to the railway; Wolcott's building, adjoining, had just issued from the hands of the carpenters, every nail and board of which glistened with freshness; from the property now in possession of J. Slotterback to that of James C. Durbin, Esq., was a vacancy considerable in extent, free to the intrusions of man or beast, and offering a wide range of vision to the residents opposite. The house now owned and occupied by Rev. George Harvey was upon the extreme outskirts of the village, flanked by an undergrowth of forest on the side toward the railway, and by an open section, on the West side, to the residence of Nathaniel Woland. Unoccupied spaces, at various intervals, also existed from thence to Garman's Drug Store, though not so frequent

here as elsewhere throughout the entire length of the street. The half-square, from Market street to the residence of Elias Kocher, upon which are now located the *Register* office, the Boot and Shoe Store of J. L. Shaud, the Dry Goods House of George Koser, the Hardware Store of Brubaker & Brother, the Flour and Feed Store of William Wallace, the Furniture Establishment of Abel Wise & Co., as well as the private residence of G. B. Brubaker, was then a complete vacancy, traversed by a well-worn foot-path leading to the log school-house, and to the stone church of the Methodists, on North Second street. But two or three houses then stood on the East side of Market street, below Main, among which were the brick mansion of the Savages, already alluded to, the beer-saloon of Sebastian Dreger, now that of Werner, and the residence of Israel Ream, Esq., upon the corner of the alley, directly opposite the furniture rooms of Wise & Co. The West side was unoccupied where the Episcopal church now stands, as well as the intermediate section between this edifice and the building opposite the stable of S. H. Barrett, Esq., and at certain points further down, toward the creek. The entire square now occupied by the buildings of Judge Young in part, was also free and open as yet, a few lofty oaks and pines standing as guarding sentinels, it seemed, of the rapidly receding wilderness. Main street, from thence down, however, was comparatively well built upon, to the fact of which the old houses in that section can yet testify.

Lykens twenty years ago was without a passenger depot of any kind. The travellers to this region were few in number in those days, and were well satisfied to be left off anywhere in the neighborhood of Main street. The only passenger-car upon the road was what was termed the "monkey-box;" such as is attached to the rear of freight trains for the comfort and convenience of the men engaged thereon. The plentitude and cheapness

of wood, everywhere along the route, necessitated its employment as fuel, and every train coming or going was simply a long-winding monster of cinders and smoke. Piles of the best saplings of the forest, some sawn to the required length for engine use and others just thrown from the wagons, frequently extended, on both sides of the railway, four and five feet in height and three and four rows in depth, from above the present site of Odd Fellows' Hall to some distance below Market street; and every working-day in the week fully a score or two of men and boys found employment here in bringing this mass into proper shape.

Where now stands the elegant mansion of the Company's Superintendent, was an enormous excavation, many feet in depth, designed as a storage for the water-tank and locomotive, and which communicated with the main road by a side track. Upon the steep banks of this excavation stood two or three cherry trees, whose tempting freedom of approach and daring attitude were continual objects of solicitude to the boys of the period, during the whole of their bearing season. Many a plank was dragged from various distances to scale these wonderful trees. The cherries in all the region round about were not so sweet as these! Many an urchin, whose trowsers were mended day after day, returned time and again for still a few more patches. Coats with as many colors as Joseph's were of the most common occurrence, and yet the trees were hard to climb and the cherries just as sweet. What mattered it that the grass was green and the shadows deep upon the bank; what mattered it that the sky was blue and the sunshine flooded heaven and earth; the cherries upon the highest boughs still danced merrily in the breeze, above the reach of hands at all!

The stores of the village were few in number, and contained everything that could readily be sold, or for which there was any demand. Lewis Heilner was then the

principal merchant, however, in respect to extent of trade and merchandise, and around him shone the lesser lights of Blum, Garman, Matter and Stewart. All of these are yet among us, with the exception of Lewis Heilner, whose long career of benevolence and whole-souled charity closed calmly, sweetly, many years ago. The others, now rapidly entering upon the evening of life, have since grown into wealth and position.

Blum's store was then where it yet remains, now materially enlarged and greatly improved. Stewart held forth at the old stand of to-day, and Matter in a shanty of a story or two in height upon the present site of the large building. The store of Garman was a drug, hardware, periodical and notion combined, containing the post-office as well, where the many inducements for lounging were advantageously applied and the village news discussed. Heilner's was an imposing structure in those days, yet standing and in use.

The lodges, of which there were but two then,—the Sons of Temperance and American Mechanics—met and held their sessions in the upper story of the residence of John Hensel, Main street, opposite the building of Wolcott. This was fitted-up for the purpose, communicating with the world below by means of a stair-ease, closely built to the upper side of the house, the lot adjoining remaining unoccupied. In a blustery March evening, as well as at other periods of the year when ice was thick and sleet blinding, the ascension and descension of these stairs were rather hazardous, one frequently occupying much less time than the other, and performed on different portions of the human frame, according to fate, the designs of the devil, or to the well-founded laws of gravity—and variety.

Mystery was as potent then as now, or ever has been in the history of the world, and great was the annoyance of the sentinel at his look-out, above the stairs. Many

a believing youngster, with implicit faith in the "goat" and the wonders of the brotherhood, stole noiselessly, time and again, to the portals of this Elysium, only to be caught by the wary sentinel and made to disappear down the stairs. In fact, it was considered an accomplishment of no mean order, among the generation in their teens, to be able to mount and dismount these stairs in a stride or two, and liniments had a brisk sale so long as they remained.

Our fathers were frank and hearty, equally so in their support or denunciation. When the first lodge was organized—the Sons of Temperance—they chose a location for their sessions at once appropriate and symbolical of the creed they meant to uphold. The town-pump flourished in all its pristine simplicity right under their very noses, the melancholy creak of whose handle could be heard at almost any time upon their council floor. It was music to their ears, the gush of waters and the *thump - thump* of their faithful friend and patron, which aroused the burning eloquence of their most gifted orators and prolonged the council fires far into night.

Among the attractions of the village was a small fire-engine, worked by hand, in the custody of an efficient company of young men, ever promptly upon the scene of action. Their rendezvous was in one of the stables back of the Union House, where they also had their engine stored. This very same engine was recently dug from the bottom of Rattling Creek, somewhere in the neighborhood of the brewery, by several employees on the railway, where it had lain for years, and endeavors are now being made, it is thought, to start it anew upon a career of usefulness. Its long rest, under circumstances rather damaging to its finer organization, as well as the increased demands upon any structure of the kind, would seriously interfere with this project. A relic once so useful and even now so suggestive, should have a promi-

nent position in the town museum, where it might yet serve the two-fold purpose of pumping sufficient inspiration into the heads of our borough fathers and sufficient solicitude into their hearts to procure a new one, such as the town is actually in need of.

It has already been said that the log school-house and the stone church of the Methodists,—the only two buildings then in the village designed for secular and religious instruction, except the edifice of the Roman Catholics, of which we shall have something more to say hereafter,—were upon North Second street; both converted into dwellings since, and as such, occupied. One now the property of H.W. Fox and the other of A. F. Engelbert, Esq., and stand to-day in the same relative position and much in the same condition as they did twenty years ago. Possibly the school-house was a little more shabby and the church a trifle more elegant, to all outward appearances.

In a fair-meaning sense of the word, North Second street was not yet opened. It is true that the wilderness was hewn down, in a great measure, where the street is now located, and that a house or two even then existed upon the present site; but, except in the immediate neighborhood of the school-house and the church, the fallen trees yet blocked the way, the thick and tangled undergrowth of shrubbery, the mangled branches of the trees whose leaves even then gave evidence of greenness above the deadness surrounding them, and the long rows of stumps oozing their pithy sap under the boiling sun,—all remained upon the scene.

The forest extended to the garden gates in the rear of the dwellers on the north side of Main street, although divided somewhat by the narrow strip just opened, and the long snout of the pig rooted deeply for the acorns among the dead and decaying leaves of that region. Truly a scene of Arcadian simplicity! where the chanteleer decried the morning from his perch upon the oak;

and the duck waddled to the waters in the gray of dawn!

Nowhere upon the whole town-plot existed so many obstacles to domestication as in this very locality. Stones of every shape, size and condition, abounded more than plentifully everywhere. Great ledges of rocks, as it were, stretched, surface-deep scarcely, many hundred yards in length. A ridge of more than usual magnitude, traversed the lot of Joseph Miller, Esq., and extended itself to some distance below the present Lutheran church. The foundation of that edifice was built from the superabundance of this material, and many more denominations might also have founded themselves upon rocks altogether, in that neighborhood, and still formed committees of the whole to investigate the propriety of importing others.

The tract upon which the old school-house and church are located was also as rocky as it well could be, and contained a dozen or two of pines at various intervals. The basement of the church was occupied by the village high-school, under the professorship of a certain Mr. McGuire. There may be some among whom this sketch is circulated who yet remember this man McGuire, his customs and habits, as well as the sternness of his discipline. A man of commanding height and muscularity, thirty-five years of age, probably, invariably dressed in black, with heavy, shaggy beard and eyebrows, also black, a look of rigidity and sternness which penetrated to the very marrow of one's bones, and into every nook and corner of his school. It was his habit to parade the room during recitations, with a hand under a coat-tail or two, occasionally raking the fire, which he did with a vehemence, all the while slyly investigating the reasons for a half-closed desk-lid or the unusual whisperings in suspicious localities. During his spare moments he read medicine, of which a book or more always lay upon his desk in school hours, open at the page on which his

readings ceased from time to time. And great was the perplexity of the scholars when he entered the playground at recess, and scraped the pine-pith from the hacked and hewn places on the trees, with an old and rusty barlow-knife! The general impression among the scholars seemed to have been that he manufactured a kind of salve from this, a perfect miracle in the art of drawing boils and carbuncles. How it ever originated is not known,—probably from the imagination of one more gifted than the others; for the fact was never traced to any reliable source. Both master and mystery, however, have since drifted out with the tide, and the doors of that school are closed forever.

There is a tradition fully credited in some quarters that the school-master received his degree a few years after; that his bachelor heart no longer pined in singleness; that he practised his profession in one of the valleys below us, and from thence again drifted to a region of the Far West.

The memory of those school days is yet with us; the charcoal frescos on the wall; the carved and battered benches; the well-heaped window-sills of hats and shawls; the rosy faces of the girls; the mischievous glances of the boys; the ink-stained desks; the water bucket in the hall! And now again there comes before me, as of old, the form of one long since within her grave. Her laugh is joyous, ringing, and her large blue eyes sparkle with a beauty not of earth. The hectic flush is upon her cheeks, and the hollow cough tells a tale only too well-known to all. Yet, her step is swift and airy, and her pleasures keen as any. The first within the ring, the last to depart! How strange a thing life is that a face so full of grace and beauty should bloom like a rose to-day and to-morrow fade into death. Mystery of mysteries! which Time infinite and unchangeable alone can reveal. To-night the silent town is wrapt in dark-

ness, and upon her grave, far up the hill-top, the stars of heaven look down!

Barring-out was a custom not well established in this region. When it occurred at all it was generally upon Shrove Tuesday—the *Fastnacht* of the native Germans,—and not upon the Christmas of other localities. Once upon a time it befell the master of this school. The windows were nailed fast, one and all; the benches were dragged from all parts of the room and piled against the door,—a long row extending to the stove, as a prop; the terms of treaty were already thrust without, and all awaited the anxious moment with throbbing expectancy. For one brief hour the scholars were master,—the tables turned, as it were, and riot ran high and wild. For one brief hour only. Then came a rap upon the door which quaked the stoutest hearts and struck conviction to the very core. A voice soon followed after still more effective. The hiding-places emptied themselves as if by magic; the windows swarmed with hands and faces eager to escape; somehow, the doors flew open; the terms of treaty disappeared; the benches grew dangerous with life and animation, never so suddenly evinced before or since; all things moved to their accustomed places with marvelous speed; soon the hive began to hum and sing and groan with labor! never with so much will and steadfastness as upon that day.

While these pages are yet freshly written, the question has arisen whether the building alluded to as the “old school-house” really was *log*, in point of fact. The proposal to ascertain this by means of a few simple experiments with the covering supposed to conceal the true state of things, was met with such a show of opposition as, it is feared, will forever shroud this interesting question with an impenetrable veil of mystery. It is strange how few are the people who have any regard for truth; how little is their desire to help the great world on, even in

the elucidation of a fact at once so simple and conclusive! where the work would gladly be done by others and the permission alone is awaited!

But, after all, it is of no great importance whether the building was of logs or not. It was outrageously cold, anyhow, and froze many any urehin pale and sick, while his feet were yet upon the fender and his head wrapt well with wool. All winter long the winds howled dismally around the eaves of this old school-house. With every blast the windows rattled in their frames as though they could not remain a moment longer; tempest-tossed the room swayed to and fro, and many a youngster rocked to sleep upon that school-house floor.

On the coldest days the stove failed utterly in giving any degree of comfort to the room. The ink was thick within the bottles but a bench or two removed, and lips grew blue with cold. Then it was a magic circle was drawn around the warmth, and the scholars took their turn within this ring,—the younger first and longest and the eldest least of all. How reluctantly they leave, how willingly they go. What meaning glances, what grotesque faces, as they pass each other to and fro. And once within that circle, is it not a curious thing, the band regained its cunning, just twenty years ago!

It was at this time, or shortly after, in the history of the school that it was taught by a Mrs. Parkhurst, whose two sons, aged respectively about eight and ten, also attended. The attendance of this offspring is particularly noted from the fact that it was considered a gracious privilege with her to allow any of the scholars to associate with them, so uncontaminated were the spotless characters of these youths, and only those whose daily conduct was majestically above reproach, could lay any claim to that honor. But once within the golden gate of privilege, the pleasures were more than compensatory for the trials. You were then allowed the happiness of

bestowing them an apple or a bunch of grapes, and they gratified you by receiving them. At the same time, the Parkhurst home was opened unto you, and if your shoes were clean and your personal appearance anyway inviting, you might roll yourself upon the Parkhurst floor, or play with the Parkhurst cat, or do some tracing upon the Parkhurst windows. All under a rule proscribed to the line and letter, and as unalterable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. Notwithstanding all this formality, however, many an evening, full of quiet pleasures, was passed within this home, and the hours of night and of departure, only came too soon.

Mrs. Parkhurst, the mistress of the school, as well as of the family, was a small, frail, delicate woman, as memory pictures her, with a high, intellectual forehead and a classic cast of features. Her weal and her woe were linked to a man of intemperate habits, whose daily pittance was spent for strong drinks. The support of the family consequently devolved almost entirely upon the efforts of this brave, little woman, and the world has yet to note the single fault of will or duty. Through winter snow and autumnal rain, daily, weekly, monthly, with the thousand trials of a mother's heart and the thousand cares of a mother's mind, the struggle for life, sadly unequal, was heroically continued, and always something wrested from the grasp of fate. The world is full of daring such as this; of deeds performed within the daily rounds of life, more lofty, self-sacrificing, than the hero's at the cannon's mouth, or the dead leader's before the van.

Tradition is equally as vague in regard to the subsequent history of the school-mistress as that of the school-master. Several years ago, upon seeing the name of Mrs. Parkhurst paraded before the public lavishly in some of the principal papers of the day, and in connection with a song of unusual merit, it is thought, endeavors were made

to establish the identity, but with no success of any kind, either for or against the supposition embraced. While residents among us, the family occupied the dwelling since remodeled from the old, now the private residence of E. Douden, Main street. From thence they removed, a year or two after the events described, to one of the northern counties of the State, it is asserted, and have never been heard from since, either directly or indirectly.

While yet upon the subject of this old school-house, there also comes to me again the memory of a dread early experienced. It was said to be haunted; why, was never ascertained. Passers-by in the dead of night heard dreadful sounds within its walls and saw dreadful sights without. The accounts were rather limited and confused, it must be confessed, and the witnesses not above the suspicions which malicious people cast upon "shining marks" of almost any kind. Their tales were mildly spoken of as hallucinations, by some, even as downright falsehoods by others, and remarks were made quite frequently, by the unbelieving, upon subjects connected with temperance and of the lowly condition of life which precluded the helping of one's self; remarks having no apparent possible bearing upon the questions at issue, and containing a waste of irony and sarcasm entirely uncalled for. Whatever effect they may have had, the truth or the fallacy, was but to make some valuable additions to the old wives' lore, and to increase the fear, already assuming large proportions, in the bosoms of the ever-credulous young. With reluctant feet and wildly-beating heart; with averted head and trembling lips, the school-house door was passed, by the village urchin, in the dusk of eve, and no inducement on earth could brace his nerves sufficiently to check his headlong speed while yet within its sight. The dilapidated, time-worn condition of the building; its almost complete isolation; its gloomy, dismal surroundings; the awe and fear which the approach

of night brings upon all the solitudes of life and nature, were admirably calculated to invest it with the stories of ghosts and goblins innumerable, and it is very much to be feared that such as were circulated from time to time were the natural outgrowth of these conditions.

A location also having the name of being haunted, and held in more dread, if possible, than the previous one, was that in the neighborhood of the newly-ereected brick dwellings of Mr. Woleott, on Water street. Somewhere here, one day, about noon, many years ago, was found the dead body of George Myers, by a party of school children in their roamings, with an emptied vial of laudanum by his side and a pocket-handkerchief spread lengthwise across his face. He had been an employee of some kind on the railway, and had left his home, upon the outskirts of the village, three or four days previously, with an excuse, perfectly reasonable and satisfactory, it seemed, to have embraced an absence of about that length of time. With a vial of laudanum and a pocket-knife, he started upon a tour of inspection, and selected this spot, of all others, for his sleep of death. The wilderness was dense here; the banks of the creek near by. The tree-tops closed out the very light of heaven, and the moss, upon the earth beneath, was thick and velvety. Collecting some freshly hewn branches of the trees, he made himself a bower, of his own length, well closed with leaves upon the top and sides, and of height barely sufficient to enable him to creep within. Here, upon that solemn night, he slept his life away, with his hands upon his bosom, faithless to its trust, and his face upturned upon the Almighty God avenged! What a picture of horror, agony and remorse; of the wild pleadings of the heart and the stern commandings of the mind; of decisions and indecisions; of the thousand acts of life which present themselves now with a vividness never realized before, and in colors as indelible as the light of stars above him, in the

long watches of that night, alone with the Great God who gave him life and the Silent Messenger who has come to bear it away!

The banks of the creek in the immediate vicinity of this tragic spot, and all along, for some distance remote from it, were thickly grown with maple trees of unusual density of foliage and stoutness of limb,—a fact which the amateur fisherman of this region occasionally remarked to himself, grew eloquent upon, in the solitudes of that forest, while his line embraced the branches of a number of trees in succession, and his rod swayed, pendulum-like, to and fro. The coal dirt, and the mine-drainage, strongly impregnated with sulphur, have since depopulated the waters of this creek, from its mouth to almost its source, and the rod of the fisherman is seen there no more.

Here, also, in the early spring, while the snow was yet upon the ground and the chirp of the robin unheard in the land, the village youths resorted for their maple-tapping, and the trees were lined with pails so long as sap would flow, or moisture glistened within the empty spigot. All night long the drop, drop within the slowly-filling pail broke harshly upon the stillness of the scene, with the solemn moon above and the shadows dark upon the waters. All night long visions of pails, full to the brim, delighted the senses of the village youngster, and tickled his lips to laughter. Pictures of maple-candy, of dazzling height, figured conspicuously upon the village black-boards, and the sap of the maple fastened upon everything hands had touched. Drop by drop, all day long, the pails were filled, while backs grew weary upon the hard benches of that old school-house, and many a head hung low with vision.

Skating, in the long winter nights of these primitive days, was much more of a pastime, among the lads and lasses of the period, than what it is now. The depth,

breadth and unobstructed character of Wiconisco creek, from the stone bridge to near the railway embankment, rendered this locality universally popular for skating purposes. Since the disappearance of the forests along both sides of this stream, and in all the region round about, the volume of water is greatly reduced, and the creek has actually shrunk to less than half its former size. The bonfires no longer groan and crackle in the long watches of the winter nights; the ruddy faces of the boys and girls are also things of the past; the merry laughter, the jest, the song, — they too have long since ceased to be heard, and lips and hearts and eyes that held the charm, have gone down together into dust, a score of years ago.

Water street, at this period, was a foot-path leading to a clearing or two a short distance west of Market street, upon which stood the first dwellings of that section. The only features of this region in any way yet distinct to us, were the strange draw-wells and the large Dutch ovens. These draw-wells afforded us the only lesson in mechanics we ever received. They consisted of two stout branches of a tree, pronged, driven into the ground directly opposite each other at the well, with the prongs upright, a rounded cross-piece with a crank attached supplying the remaining deficiencies of apparatus. Facsimiles of this primitive ingenuity, on an extremely small scale, however, were made to order by all good brothers of the generation yet in their pantalets, and the multitudes of holes all around the borders of domestication, were so many efforts in the way of juvenile experimentation. This explains—should, at least—very satisfactorily, it is to be hoped, the mystery surrounding recent discoveries made in various sections of the borough, of holes well walled with pebbles and otherwise curiously inlaid, supposed, by savans from a distance, to

be the puny efforts of a lost race—of pigmy origin, probably, antedating history itself.

The mounds also recently investigated, and found to contain some ashes, a few pieces of pottery, burnt bread crusts, etc., attributed to the same period of antiquity, and represented as the habitations of these pigmies, could be tolerated on no other grounds than the supposition that such assertions were really meant as sarcasm, thrust upon the monstrosity of the Dutch ovens. That the future antiquary, digging in the ruins of a score of centuries, should be led to commit a similar error, is not at all to be wondered at, since, in all truth and candor, any one of them could shelter a respectably-sized family quite comfortably and have various apartments to let, besides.

On a Friday afternoon, in the days long since gone by, these ovens were a remarkable sight to behold. It was then that their true meaning could be most advantageously studied. As a youth, we were passionately fond of this kind of studying, always selecting the largest of the neighborhood as the most worthy of our attention, and we have never had reason to regret the mental labor bestowed upon any of them. Those Friday afternoons, sad to relate, however, are passed forever by us, but the sweet memory of their fragrance still haunts our hungry senses. We seem to see, as of old, the long rows of pans, heaped high with dough, ready for the heated oven; the busy housewife, with her pinned-up dress and her kerchief bound tightly upon her head, the knots beneath her chin rendering deglutition extremely dangerous; the long-handled wooden shovel; the iron scraper; the pile of ashes by her side. The scents of a Persian garden could not outvie the delicious odors wafted through the air from the mouth of that oven, as it stood uncovered for a few moments only, from time to time. Were we a heathen, in a far-off country, and badly in need of an

idol, the Dutch oven, with its good-natured grin and pot-bellied benevolence, should be set up everywhere in the public highplaces of our heart and habitation.

This locality was also a favorite one for fisheries. The creek in the immediate neighborhood of J. Trout's Carriage Manufactory of to-day, was then completely obstructed with dams, nets and baskets, studiously designed to entrap everything bearing any resemblance to a tail or a pair of fins that might incidentally wander that way. The dwellers near by, however, were not any more distinguished for acuteness of intellect than those more remote, and for this reason alone it is very much to be suspicioned that the amount of phosphorus annually consumed in that region was not alarmingly great, notwithstanding the hungry ingenuity of the dwellers by the green waters of that creek.

Even in these remote times the village had a hall for public entertainments. It was a queer shaped building, standing on the corner of the alley, opposite the stable of S. H. Barrett, Esq. The lower story was occupied as a carpenter shop; the upper, reached by a stair-case from the alley, answering the purposes of a hall. This building has since been remodeled to a dwelling, and has been occupied as such for a number of years past. A few chairs, intended for reserved seats on occasions of entertainment, some benches with backs and others without backs, a rusty, tobacco-bespattered stove, with crooked, loosely-supported pipe, and a few charts upon the wall, constituted all the furniture the hall contained on any occasion, however important. Two miserable little lamps swung in brackets suspended from the ceiling, and a few others met with uncertain support in various attitudes and at irregular distances on the walls. A stage proper had never been erected, but a temporary one was always devised, when occasion required, by the free use of a few planks and a dozen or two of boards. Upon

this the programme of the evening was most generally enacted, and all went as merrily as a marriage bell.

The entertainment of the period most frequently consisted of sleight-of-hand performances, by self-styled professors of the black art, whose appearance anywhere else but in the out-of-the-way places of civilization, would have been strictly discountenanced. Their coming was announced several weeks before usually by huge posters with the time and place inserted in writing, and the whole graced by illustrations of the most astonishing part of their wonders. Of such were the educated pig in the act of playing cards with its master; the professor himself, in a swallow-tailed coat and extremely tight pantaloons, shooting a pistol into the face of another professor of unusual heroism of attitude and wealth of diamonds,—the bullet of the shooting pistol harmlessly held between the teeth of the intended victim; the professor again in the act of eating red-hot coals from a shovel, of drawing many hundred yards of ribbon from his mouth, and finally emptying the contents of a well-stocked millinery store from an ordinary sized hat!

These exhibitions, given, as they most frequently were, on a Saturday evening, after the labor and worry of the week, were well patronized by the young of both sexes. Here came the village beau arm-in-arm with the village belle, both munching gum-drops and mildly nudging each other as the extraordinary wonders of the evening, one by one, displayed themselves before them. Here also came the village youngster—that whistling, screeching, stamping, tricky, ungodly human being whose very presence is exquisite torture and inevitable ruin! His both hands in his pockets, spread out like a pair of sails in a calm; every particular cent of his hoardings all ajingle in the deepest depths of his pantaloons! He “laughs like a horse” at anything that strikes his sense of the humorous; he completely obstructs the sight of his neigh-

bors by standing tip-toe upon the highest parts of his seat, in order to see all that transpires; he calls for a half-dozen different kinds of liquors in a prolonged shout, from the changeable bottle, and then insists upon having just what is not to be gotten; he is the indispensable for the amusement of the audience; he returns home to experiment! Of all those who passed their Saturday evening here, he was certainly the most richly rewarded for the outlay of his time and his money. Public entertainments were so rare in those days, however, and the village monotony so distressingly oppressive, that many very much older "boys" than himself were glad to invest in an hour's novelty, such as this.

Rattling creek presented more attractions in the primitive days of the town than what has been claimed for it before or since, though none at this date that were so well known, so much frequented, and yet so distinct within our own recollections, as the iron swing, then, and for many years afterwards, a little back from the public road, near the second bridge. A wilder, more romantic cozier little spot could not be found in all those parts. The dark, dense wilderness on every side; the tortuous, rocky, dashing, roaring, foaming little creek in front, and the towering, shadowy, silent mountain in the rear! Ah me, what a grateful sense of coolness came upon one here, after the dust and heat beyond. How bracing the air, and how beautiful the grass and leaves! The silence sweeter than all.

Upon a Sunday afternoon, in the breezy, golden days of Summer, this swing was rarely without an occupant. Groups of little girls in white dresses and pink sashes were in constant waiting for their "turn," while the many little handkerchiefs fluttering about the faces of the boys, and the piles of hats and coats upon the green sward beyond, told the old, old story, long before the rights of sex

were found to be so unequally divided and the subject wrought to its present fantastical forms of discussion.

To be seated upon that swing with both hands firmly grasping the iron bars on either side; to be swung high up into the air, so that your toes could almost touch the branches of the trees at your feet, were pleasures of unceasing novelty and of some boldness of indulgence. How brave the little girls, how timid, fainty, hysterical the large ones. They need must be held upon that swing, as it darts, like an arrow, upward. Strange is it indeed that the forces of nature are occasionally so ill-proportioned. Yet the iron swing held aill; swung many a chapter of a tale well-told, in the long Summer days, full many a year ago.

The hill upon which the residence of Dr. W. J. Smith is now located, and which bids fair to become a Summer resort of some excellence in the near future, as well as a village in itself, was given over to the owls and whip-poor-wills, and to the slow, measured stroke of the woodman's axe. It was just then that it was hewn of its timber, and the horse and the draw-chain, as they clanged their way up and down the hill, all day long, were the most interesting objects there. Later in the season, however, when the snow was deep upon the ground, and the broad, wagon-road leading to its summit free from logs and the *debris* incident to them, there were other objects there, much more interesting. A better place for coasting could not be found in all the region, and a ride a-down that hill, upon a trusty sled and a well-fed stomach, the full, unclouded moon o'erhead, was an enjoyment for which the village youth would gladly forfeit all he had and risk his neck besides.

Far into night the shout, the laughter, the song came in snatches down the village street, in the roar and sweeping of the wind, startling the neighborhood in sleep and bringing many an anxious mother to the door. Far

into night the sleds came down the hill, one closely upon the other, in endless rows, it seemed, ploughing up the snow in furrows and blinding the sight and steering of the guide. At every turn destruction and misfortune met the eye. Sleds with broken backs and runners; sleds whose owners lay sprawling in the snow, howling with rage or pain; sleds making the best of their way down upon their own backs, their former occupants following after; girls and boys heaped in the road, one beneath the other, wildly endeavoring to extricate themselves from the rapidly increasing mass; some rolling down the hill and others wearily wending their way upward, hungry, hoarse, wet and stiff with cold! Could some have known how savagely the birchen switches danced with rage behind the kitchen door at home; how long the supper stood upon the hearth, drying and frizzling itself to waste; how nervous the hands upon the window, shading eyes that vainly endeavored to penetrate through mist and darkness, to lights that lit the heavens beyond, the sleds upon that hill would count a full score less and voices that rang the shrillest in the uproar of the night, hushed long in sleep.

The road has long since widened into streets; the oak and pine have disappeared; the housetops rise in close succession, one above the other, already half way up; the glittering steeple, from its side, reflects the light of heaven and the cold and frosty tomb the light of God!

Rivalry, among the religious denominations of the period, was much greater and more acrimonious than what the present age could possibly tolerate. The most striking of our recollections of the Roman Catholic Church at this time, situated then as now in the very locality we have just treated of, is in connection with the Reverend Father in charge. He was an old man, a little weak in the knees, and strongly addicted to the use of a cane. His kindly feeling for children brought him into

contact with all the urehins of the village, who were regularly bribed, once a week at least, by means of a medal and a few sweetmeats, to forego the religion of their fathers and adopt the blessed faith of the holy Catholie church.

The church itself was upon the extreme limits of habitation, possibly the last building of any kind in that direction. A narrow, eountry road extended to a little distance beyond it, the branches of the trees on either side almost interloeking one another. A more truly rural retreat, in the green and leafy time of Summer, would be impossible to imagine.

A little in from this road, in an oblique direction from the church, stood an old steam saw-mill, an abandoned, dilapidated, crumbling old structure even in those days, not a stone marking its former existenee to-day. The exact site of this old mill has since been taken up by the lots of H. A. Earhart, of Wiconiseo, and where once, many, many years ago, the hum, the groan and shriek of the revolving saw struck musieally upon the ear, the towering bean-poles to-day stand picturesquely in sight, and the smothered corn stubble struggles to keep its head above the snow!

Never a place afforded more alluring advantages in the old play of hide-and-seek. Once within some profoundly sceret nook or corner of that old building—some hole beneath a loose or rotten plank, a cave within the masonry or a mound of *debris*, the Day of Judgment could pass you by unfound and the Trumpet's sound fail to reach you. Never a place that held its charms so long, where hours sped so soon and dirt held on so fast; where nails stuck out so far and were so artful in their designs upon inoffeuding flesh and trowsers. The picture of that old mill upon memory's walls to-day, its towering ehimney of brick and stone, leaning, loose and erumbling; its open front, through which the sunshine found its way

and bathed the floor in light; the plane upon which the logs rolled up and the boys slid down upon their "hunkers;" the eaves from which the swallows darted all day long and twittered in their nests; the monster logs beneath, with see-saw planks across their backs and little maidens swinging into song,—this picture upon memory's walls to-day, is the richest legacy of our youth.

Twenty years ago the glory of the Battalion-Day was just in its wane. For more than a half century its lustre was a thing of renown and its name a guiding star of the almanac. The threats of secession in the South, the mutterings of war in the North attracted the attention of the country to something more defensive than pop-beer and ginger-bread, and the grand strut of the militia captain, awing and soul-inspiring upon that all-conspicuous day, had lost its fear and importance in the impending crisis.

The last of such days was held at Lykens at this period. The woods, for many acres square upon what is now North Second street, beyond the railway embankment, were hewn down and removed, and the undergrowth of shrubbery burned to the surface. The tent-pole took the place of the sapling, and the flag-staff and canvas crowned the scene. Never before had the village enjoyed so much importance. The war horse danced and pranced before admiring multitudes in the street, snuffing danger afar off. From his glossy sides, like a thing that had grown from him, towered the brave commander, stiff with silent grandeur. How our heart went up and our breath came fast and thick at the sight of this august personage! his extensive epaulets, glittering sword and the gorgeous plumage upon his hat! If we could have exchanged our lot with any one in the wide, wide world at that moment, it would have been with that statue of pomposity at the head of such magnificence!

Every fresh arrival of militia brought with it its own

brass band or drum corps, which struck up a lively strain the moment it entered the village, and only ceased after breath became an object of extreme solicitude. Every fresh arrival also brought to the doors all the village that could contain itself, and with it such an aroma of cinnamon and ginger as brought tears of anguish to the nose of the visitor and such friendliness of heart and hand as extended its own welcome anywhere. The streets wore a holiday attire; and root-beer was only two cents a glass. The amount of cake that could have been bought for a penny at any of the numerous stands, would have disgusted the stomach of an elephant.

Alas, for slow, plodding humanity, Time flies—*Tempus fugit*, the old Roman had it—and what was yesterday is forever gone to-day. The tented field of twenty years ago, with its mimicry of war, where the grim sentinel paced his rounds in jest and the watch fires of night crackled humorously of the poor, little cannon in the front and the stocks of harmless rifles in the rear, is suggestive of no such scenes to-night. Here, too, change has swept away the landmarks of our youth. The house-top rears its head above the forest; the hearth-fires of home glow and sparkle upon the pictured wall; the street is white with snow. From out the opened door the voice of song and melody comes quivering forth, the light streams in banners across the way, the curtained window displays in pantomimic figures the life within. Where once the swamp bore mire a boot-length deep; where fern and brier and rotting log debarred the way and birds had built their nests in peace and safety; where pine and spruce stood thick, and dark, and spectral, and croak of frog gave dismal token of approaching eve, the public road, well walled and bridged, winds in hillocks out of sight, and all is life and bustle.

Above the dead and buried years memory alone holds vigil, the God of yesterday, to-day and forever is still the same, and the things of Time alone have changed.